

THE INTEGRATION OF HOTS-ORIENTED INSTRUCTION IN GRAMMAR CLASS

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Abstract

Commonly, grammar is seen as a rigid, boring course, even less contributing to the improvement of the other English skills. In fact, the purpose of learning grammar is to improve the quality of communication both oral and written. In other words, the better the grammar understanding, the more likely the other skills will increase. The problem found in the field is that grammar has been taught deductively. The accompanying exercises are still in the Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) realm. In fact, there are many models of activities and exercises offered by various sources (textbooks) that support the integration of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS), so that grammar learning is more contextual and communicative. Therefore, other macro skills will be promoted. This study describes how HOTS-oriented instruction in grammar class is implemented and how the implementation supports the improvement of students' macro skills. This study belongs to an Action Research. The data collection techniques include observation, interviews, and documentation. The gained data were analysed using model from Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) which includes data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results indicate that the HOTS principles were done through employing pictures, videos, brochures as the materials and the exercises designed in various activities such as giving opinion, dialogues, writing simple stories. The HOTS integration yields promotion on students' macro skills such as writing, reading and speaking. Their works are more meaningful and reach the level of analyzing, not only at the level of remembering and understanding.

Keywords: *grammar, HOTS, LOTS*

INTRODUCTION

During their study, students of the English Language Study Program are required to take grammar courses in basic, intermediate to advanced levels. Specifically, grammar courses become the provisions of students to take the next relevant courses. More generally, the mastery of grammar is expected to support students' macro skills including listening, reading, speaking and writing. In other words, grammar mastery influences students' communication skills (oral and written).

Currently, the main learning source used is textbooks. There is a huge number of books from qualified publishers. Those textbooks present materials along with the relevant tasks. Some of the tasks refer to Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) when the students are required to work on certain pattern. Some other tasks lead to Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS), which enable the students to execute wider range of activities rather than changing verbs into appropriate forms.

Often some contexts in the books are unfamiliar with the students' life; actually, there is an opportunity for lecturers to develop their own learning activities and exercises, so that HOTS can be integrated. Often due to limited time, energy, etc., grammar activities are carried out deductively by presenting topics and sentence patterns taught, followed by exercises such as making sentences according to examples, completing sentences with certain verbs or changing the verb to another form (past, perfect, etc.). These activities are still included in the LOTS realm.

To support the integration of HOTS in grammar class, lecturers must pay attention to the chosen set of activities. Macro skills such as speaking, listening, reading and writing should be emphasized so that grammar is truly learned communicatively.

Cameron (2001) contends that "being able to talk about the language is very different from being able to talk in the language". That is, mastering grammar does not guarantee students are able to automatically use the formulas they master in their speaking skills. However, Cameron further emphasizes that grammar would be more effective if it was taught implicitly through discourse about their real life and meaningful activities. In other words, the input obtained by students must be contextual and delivered through activities that reduce the serious, rigid nuances.

Based on the problems found, researchers have made efforts to improve the grammar learning process by integrating HOTS, with the aim to help students understand it through meaningful activities.

Based on observations on the grammar learning process, there are a number of problems identified as follows: 1) The existing printed textbooks actually offer a variety of activities and exercises that contain both LOTS and HOTS levels. However, in its execution in class, lecturers often have limitations in terms of time and ability to implement HOTS. In the end, more grammar teaching is done deductively and is followed by a set of tasks at the LOTS level. 2) There is still an assumption that grammar is a subject that teaches linguistic elements separately and is not associated with other skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing). Thus, the present study aims to support communicative grammar learning, in order that the students can perform accuracy in their communication.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Grammar Teaching

Regarding the teaching of grammar, Larsen-Freeman (2001) proposes that the emphasis on meaningfulness and use must be pursued rather than analyzing certain patterns (form / rule). This does not necessarily eliminate the teaching of grammar elements, but as much as possible implicitly these elements are applied through activities that allow students to communicate using the elements to be taught.

However, Sekhan in Cameron (2001) undelines the weaknesses of grammar teaching through communicative activities may lead to inaccurate grammar used by students. In other words, explicit teaching still needs to be done. The best decision is to employ both communicative activities and exposure to grammar elements.

HOTS-oriented Instruction on Grammar Teaching

Higher order thinking skills (HOTS) were firstly introduced with three levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, including analysis, synthesis and evaluation. In 2001, Anderson and Krathwohl revised it into analysis, evaluation and creation. In fact the taxonomy can accommodate various learning objectives. HOTS is closely related to the skills that people must have in the 21st century today. Yen and

Halili (2015, in Zulharby & Nuruddin, 2019) stated that HOTS has four dimensions including critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving and decision making.

What does HOTS have to do with grammar teaching? According to Harmer (2007: 81-82), two kinds of grammar learning approaches are deductive and inductive. In deductive approach, students are given explanations and formulas. Students usually make phrases or sentences based on the formulas that have been discussed. Instead, the inductive approach presents examples of sentences, text, images, etc., and the students will eventually find the formula contained. Which one is better? Both have advantages and disadvantages, but in the context of grammar for higher education, an inductive approach is recommended so that HOTS can be integrated.

Similar idea is proposed by Ellis (2001, at Ezzi, 2012) who says, "explicit grammar instruction would develop only a declarative knowledge of grammar which enables a student to describe a rule of grammar, but would not affect the procedural knowledge that enables students to apply grammar rules in language use or in communication."

From the basic theories of HOTS and inductive grammar previously discussed, it can be concluded that teaching grammar is recommended to carry the principles of inductive teaching with a variety of communicative activities and exercises (involving other macro skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking). This study has carried out these principles and the results of the study indicate that the students can apply grammar rules in their communication skills both oral and written, in accordance with the demands of 21st century learning.

METHOD

In accordance with the basic objectives of this study, namely to improve the quality of education through efforts to improve learning, by improving the conditions under which these learning practices are carried out, this research is an Action Research (AR). Koshy (2005: 1-2) states that "doing action research facilitates evaluation and reflection in order to implement necessary changes in practice, both for an individual and within an institution, with increased

understanding and confidence". In other words, AR offers approaches and procedures that are expected to offer improvement and professional improvement of teachers / lecturers in the teaching and learning process in the classroom by examining indicators of the success of the process and learning outcomes that occur in students / students and teaching and learning process. This research was conducted from June to September 2019. The research was conducted at a PBI Study Program of a private university in Yogyakarta, involving students who joined Advanced English Grammar class. The data were collected through observation, documentation, and interview. The collected data were then analysed using qualitative data analysis model from Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014).

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

This part describes the results of the research by presenting answers to the formulation of the problems that were stated earlier.

How HOTS-oriented instruction in grammar lectures is implemented

HOTS was integrated in the brainstorming, core activity and the tasks or exercises. Materials (explanation of formulas) were given in smaller portions than practice because grammar it was more effective if formulas were understood when students solve problems through given assignments. The following are evidences of HOTS integration efforts in the material and tasks.

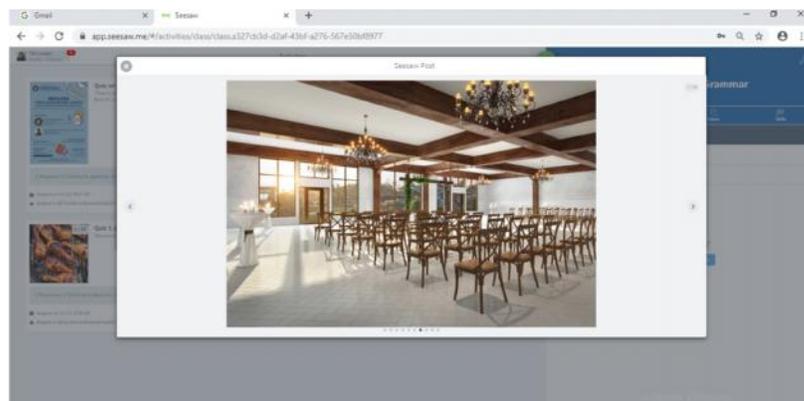
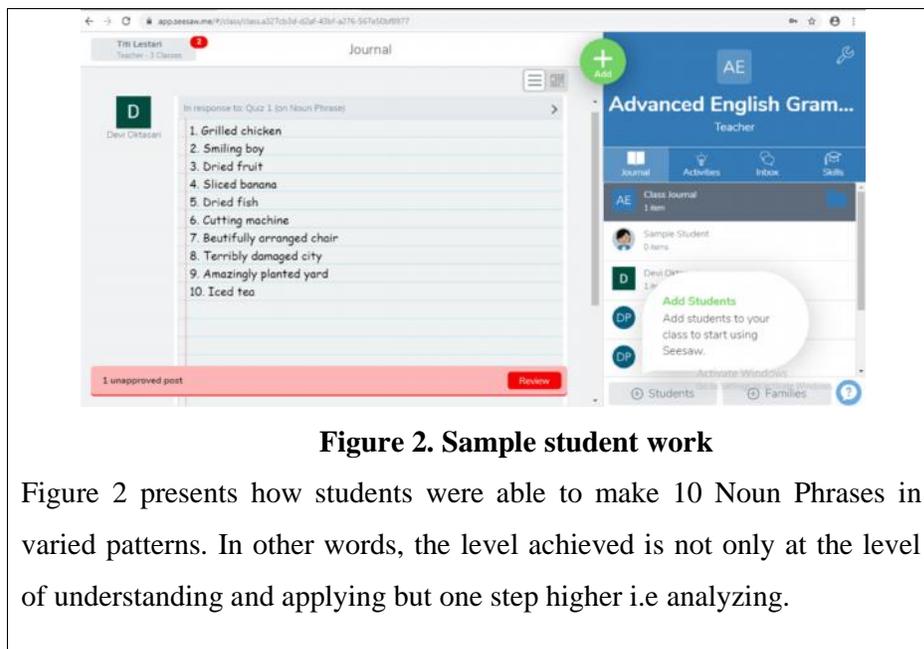


Figure 1. The brainstorming stage

In line with one of the 21st century skills, namely technological skills, the materials were given through a platform called Seesaw. This platform has features that are relevant to learning needs. In addition, this application/platform is affordable for students. Figure 1 shows a sample display of images given to students when they discussed the topic of Noun Phrase. From this picture students were expected to be able to make Noun Phrase with varied patterns such as tidy rooms, beautiful rooms, well-arranged chairs, beautifully-designed rooms, and so on. Giving pictures like this more supports the emergence of student creativity rather than giving them formulas from the beginning of the classroom activity. In the exercise phase, the lecturer gave several pictures with the same instructions as the brainstorming stage. The following is a screenshot of the student's work.



In addition to the ability of students to make phrases based on the input provided, their motivation also increased because the medium they used was not boring. The Seesaw application offers a pleasant writing space. In addition, the lecturer could provide individual feedback with a display similar to social media, as in Figure 3 below.

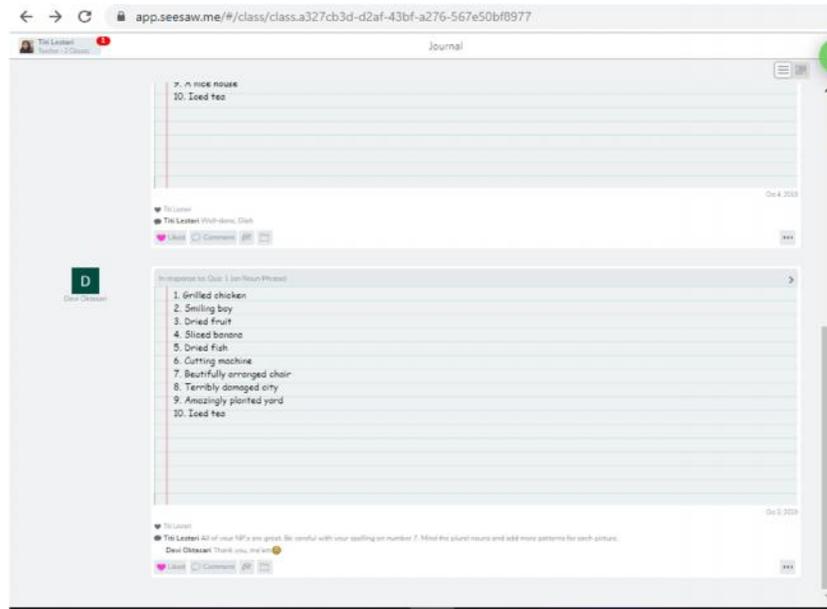


Figure 3. Teacher's feedback

As shown in Figure 3, students wrote down their work on the note menu. Teacher could give responses such as likes or comments in the form of text or files. Students could reply to the teacher's feedback in the same room. That way, communication still occurs even though learning is not carried out in class.

How HOTS-oriented instruction in grammar class supports the improvement of student's macro skills

While grammar is generally considered a separate component of the four English language skills (reading, speaking, listening and writing), the integration of HOTS can be one of the efforts so that macro skills can be promoted. One of the skills carried in this study is reading skills. Grammar cannot always be held only by giving formulas then followed by structured training. The writer tried to provide reading material in the form of academic event brochures that must be analyzed by students. The following is an example of a task display using a workshop brochure.

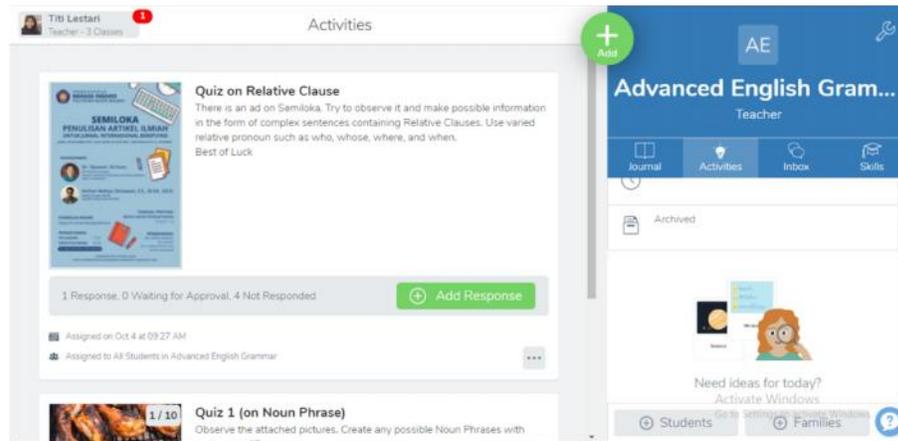


Figure 4. A task which promotes reading skill

The brochure like in picture 4 is often used in the Reading class. In grammar classes, data like this can spur student creativity to make complex sentences (such as instructions on screenshots). Students are no longer served with exercises from old, printed grammar books. They could make Relative Clauses at the same time got real information about academic events which are certainly useful for their study needs.

Through the integration of HOTS, speaking skills can also be promoted through communicative activities. In this activity researchers did not not employ online learning, rather, in classroom context the students presented a report (monologue) about the activities or schedule of one of their friends. The information was obtained from the exam card which must be elaborated with complex sentences containing Relative Clauses. Critical thinking is also carried out through activities that require students to provide responses or opinions related to issues that exist in their neighborhood or the wider scale of environment. In this activity, the teacher inductively taught Noun Clause.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Grammar is an old topic which if raised as a topic of current research, must be represented with innovation. There have been lots of previous study which bring HOTS but very few specifically discuss grammar. Researchers have linked the

results of the research found or find relevance to the topic of this research. HOTS integration in grammar lectures carried in this study includes several activities and exercises that are tailored to the needs and levels of students. The results of integration lead to a certain level of thinking skills according to the theory on which this study is based. HOTS integration presented in this study supports and adds to the portion of students to use grammar in macro skills such as reading, speaking and writing. Similar research with a wider and deeper scope of integration needs to be done so that teachers or lecturers have a rich picture of the demands of 21st century education, one of which is the demands of learning that support the ability to think higher.

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